

the Confederacy has made less progress within the past half century than this very Island. Its towns are small, and exhibit a want of vitality and activity which clearly shows the sluggishness of the existing commerce. If it were not for the coal trade, in all probability matters would be in even a worse condition than they are now. The repeal of the mining monopoly, some years ago, led to the opening up of many coal mines, but, unhappily for the Island, the repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty came to paralyze this trade and retard the development of one of the greatest resources of the country. At present the works are not conducted with anything like the activity that would exist under more auspicious circumstances. The fishermen, it is well known, are starving in some parts of the Island,—depending solely for relief on the charity which their countrymen can extend to them. All classes of the community, in fact, feel forcibly the pressure of “hard times.”

It is at this season of trial and adversity that the people of Cape Breton, in common with the rest of the Province, are called upon to take part in an agitation which, if persisted in, must lead to the most injurious results to all classes. It must be obvious that the prosperity of the Island depends on the opening up of new channels of trade, on the creation of new enterprises, and on the renewal of activity in all branches of commerce. This being the case, we naturally look about to see how it is possible to direct capital and enterprise into our midst. It requires no demonstration to show that the connection with a great country, which is the seat of activity and enterprise, must tend to the development of resources of so valuable a character as those possessed by Cape Breton. It is only necessary to consider the geographical situation of the Island to appreciate the advantages which must proceed sooner or later from the Union. It stands at the very entrance of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the outlet of the great artery of Ontario and Quebec. More than a century ago the French recognized its value, and raised on its eastern shore one of their strongest fortresses, for the purpose of protecting their shipping engaged in the Canadian and West Indian trade. They were always ready to make many sacrifices in order to retain an island which was justly considered the very key to their American possessions. Nature, indeed, seems to have designed Cape Breton to be an emporium of the trade of the Great West. Let attention be once directed to its shores, capital and enterprise will flow in abundantly, and the island will at last assume its proper position among commercial and maritime communities. Its coal mines will present scenes of constant activity, and its ports will exhibit all the evidences of a busy commerce. No other section of the Dominion is more favourably situated for trade with Canada and the rest of the world, and yet there are men who would, at the mere demands of faction, prevent Cape Breton from realizing that destiny which the position nature has given, entitles her to achieve.